

REAPPEARANCE OF THE RUSSIAN FRONT

Czecho-Slovak Intervention Reconstitutes Both Political and Military Barriers to German Aggression in Land the Romanoffs Once Ruled

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THE re-creation of an Eastern front is not an empty dream. It seems so only to those who view the situation too narrowly—and from the strictest military angle.

The Eastern front can be reconstituted in two senses—one military, the other political and psychological. A new front of the second sort would be well worth the effort to establish it, even though a new front of the first sort may be beyond present possibilities.

Cannot Expect Great Armies Again

We cannot expect, of course, to see Russia put such armies in the field as she mobilized in 1914 and maintained in 1915, 1916 and a part of 1917—from the Baltic Sea to the Rumanian border. In all that period Russia more than offset the military power of Austria-Hungary. She would have overrun the Hungarian plains and possibly marched to the gates of Vienna had not Germany, besides defending her own Eastern frontier, gone to Austria-Hungary's aid in Galicia and in the Carpathians. Russia absorbed the shock of Austrian power and a large part of the shock of German power through the early years of the war. She saved France by tying up German resources and gave Great Britain time to create the Kitchener armies.

The Allies cannot look to her now to repeat the opportune East Prussian and Galician offensives of 1914. Or to repeat the great Brusiloff offensive of 1916, which temporarily wrecked Austria-Hungary's Eastern armies and cut short the first Austro-Hungarian assault on Italy. Nor can the Entente Powers themselves undertake to man a new line from Riga to the Bukovina. At this stage of the war a military decision must be sought on the Western front. The way to Berlin lies over the Rhine, not over the Vistula. Yet any reconstitution of a Russian front which will draw more German forces east and keep them there will help to end the war by making the Allied march across the Meuse, the Rhine and the Elbe swifter and easier.

Must Threaten Germany From Rear

What is needed—and what is now practicable—is the reestablishment of an Eastern front, political and psychological in character, with sufficient military backing to compel a reshifting of German troops eastward. Russia must become again a threat to the German rear. And she can become such a threat only through a national reorganization, following Allied intervention.

In the months since the Brest-Litovsk treaty was signed Russia has ceased to be a nation. She has had only a shadow of central government. Her territory has shrunk like Balzac's Magic Skin.

At Brest-Litovsk von Kuhlmann and von Czernin played on the credulity and folly of the Bolsheviks. They rudely dismembered the ancient Romanoff empire, Lenin and Trotsky looking on with fawning complacency. Germany took, under the disingenuous "self-determination" clauses of the treaty, the bulk of Western Russia—Finland, Lithuania, Courland, Poland and the Ukraine. She gave three Transcaucasian governments to Turkey. Later, without any warrant but force she stripped Russia of Livonia and Estonia, Carelia, the Crimea and the whole northern Black Sea coast. She allotted Bessarabia to Rumania.

Kaiser Expected Both Supplies and Recruits

In all this territory—the most populous and the most highly developed industrially in the former Romanoff Empire—Berlin set up a German overlordship. Germany began at once to exploit its resources for her own benefit and to lay plans

for reducing the rest of Russia, Siberia included, to a condition of economic dependency. It was her purpose, undoubtedly, to recruit her armies with conscripts furnished by the puppet states she had established in Western Russia. In Finland she is now demanding that Finnish troops shall attack the Allied forces which have been landed on the Kola peninsula and at Archangel.

The Bolshevik government at Moscow has been a pliant German tool. It surrendered the Baltic fleet. It made no resistance to the invasion of Southern Russia. It ceded Carelia to the Finns. Four months ago German domination of Russia seemed assured. There was no organized power anywhere capable of disputing Lenin's policy of national dismemberment and suicide or checking German penetration to and beyond the Urals.

Accident Gives Allies a Chance

But a pure accident saved Russia. Out of a clear sky came the Czecho-Slovak intervention. History contains no more romantic or dramatic episode than the sudden transformation wrought in the Russian situation by the chance interposition of these Austro-Hungarian ex-prisoners of war. Their adventure is a chronicle more stirring than the March to the Sea of Xenophon's Ten Thousand.

The Czecho-Slovaks had gladly surrendered to Brusiloff and had subsequently entered the Russian ranks. Peace left them in an embarrassing situation. They could not afford to be exchanged as prisoners. They were no longer prisoners, but rebels. They demanded an opportunity to get out of Russia by way of Vladivostok. Most of them surrendered their arms. The Bolshevik government promised them transportation to the Pacific Coast. If Germany could have read the future she would have speeded them on their way.

Germany Barred

Retreat From Russia

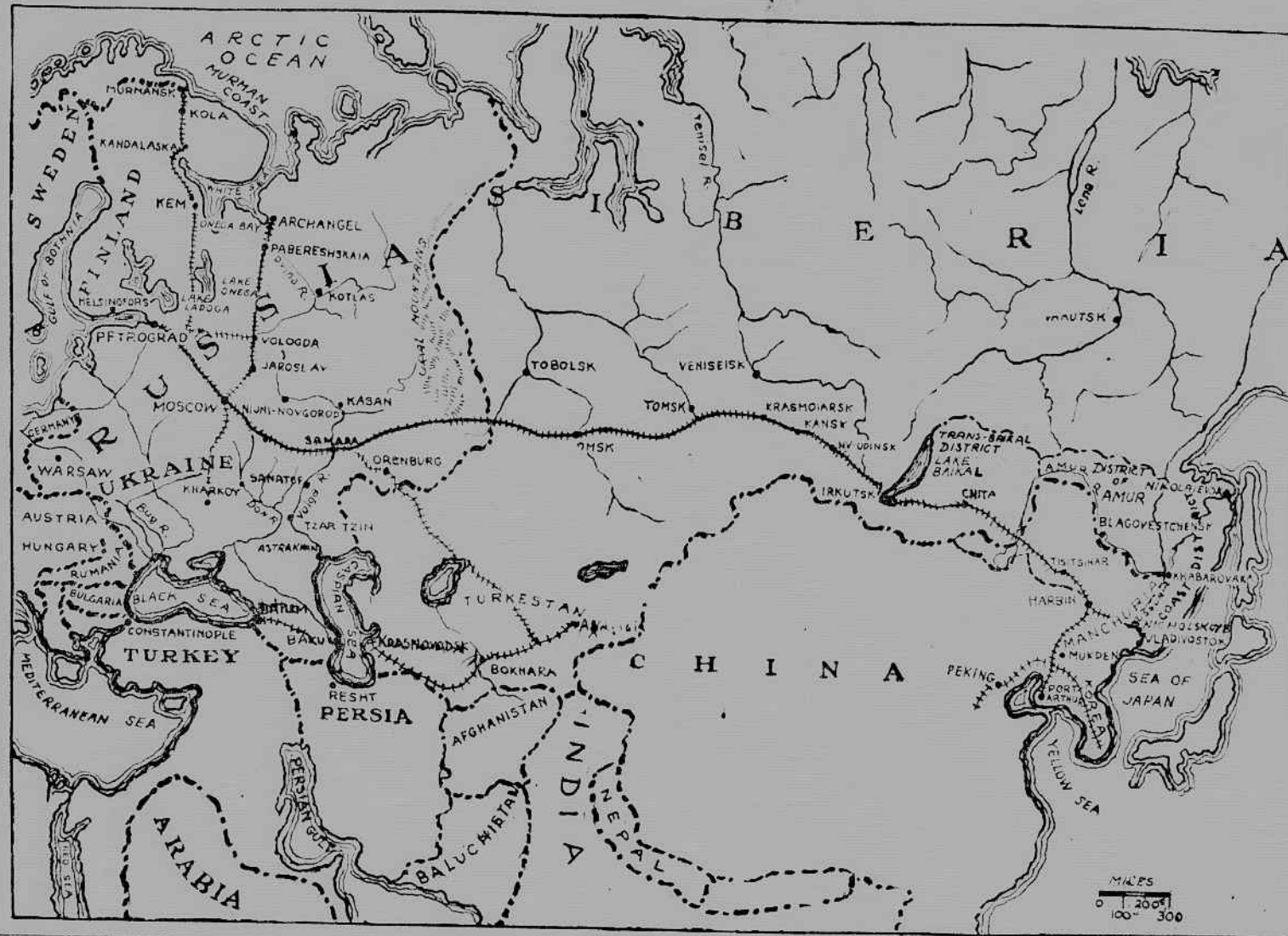
But Germany didn't want to let them escape to join the Allied armies in France and Italy. German influence with the Bolsheviks was exerted to stop them on their way through Siberia. Despite Lenin's promises, they were held up and attacked at various points on the Siberian railroad. To protect themselves they routed and disarmed the Red Guards who attempted to interfere with them. Then they seized the Siberian railroad. A few of them had got through to Vladivostok and remained there. They eventually took over that port. The rest, scattered between the Urals and Lake Baikal, extended their hold on the Siberian system until they held it practically from Irkutsk to the Ural Mountains.

Few Men Have Done Miraculous Work

The strength of the Czecho-Slovaks has been estimated at from 50,000 to 120,000. Probably there have been less than 80,000 of them under arms. But they have done a work which looks miraculous. Having cleared the Siberian line from Lake Baikal to the Urals, they have recently marched west into Russia proper and established themselves on the line of the Volga River. Lenin and Trotsky have sent armies against them. But they have held their own everywhere through their discipline, high intelligence as soldiers and extraordinary courage. Every Czecho-Slovak is an ardent patriot. He is fighting for the liberation of his race—for the realization of a dream which his people have cherished for centuries.

The Czecho-Slovak army has maintained itself in Siberia and Russia because it has never clashed with the bulk of the population. It does not oppress the people. It respects the local governments and wars only

WHERE ALLIED FORCES ARE AT WORK IN RUSSIA



against the Red Guards and the Austrian, Hungarian and German prisoners who have joined the Bolsheviks. In Eastern Russia and most of Siberia the Bolshevik rule has been tacitly or openly repudiated. The Czecho-Slovaks merely assist friendly communities to set up self-government.

Allies Slow to Realize Opportunity

Without their fortuitous interposition Russia would have been hopelessly lost to the Allies. Either the Germans would have exercised a complete and complete control through a puppet Soviet dictatorship at Moscow or the country would have lapsed into anarchy. The Allied powers were slow to realize the value of the Czecho-Slovak achievement. They had despaired of Russia. But the spectacular success of these marooned representatives of anti-Bolshevism and anti-Germanism at last stirred the Entente to action.

To relieve them and to secure their communications with the Pacific and with the Arctic had become an Allied moral obligation. Japan was evidently willing to go to their rescue. But unfortunately the United States balked for a long time at anything which looked like a military effort antagonistic to the alleged Moscow government. The organization of the Austrian, Hungarian and German prisoners of war through German influence and their employment to fight the Czecho-Slovaks finally compelled Allied action.

Teuton Prisoners Mostly Far East

Military policy requires all the Allied powers to protect the Czecho-Slovaks from enemy forces and to prevent the escape from Siberia of ex-prisoners who would join the enemy's ranks. Fortunately, the bulk of the Austrian, Hungarian and German ex-prisoners are in Eastern Siberia, where they have assimilated with themselves the remaining Red Guards and the worst convict elements. These forces can be isolated by a movement through Manchuria to Chita, east of Lake Baikal, where the unfinished Amur River branch of the Siberian railroad joins the eastern Chinese branch. They can be bottled up in Eastern Siberia and dealt with at leisure.

Before the Czecho-Slovak adventure came to a head the Allied programme in Russia contemplated nothing more than landings in Vladivostok and on the Kola Peninsula to protect military stores furnished to the pre-Soviet governments and still side-tracked there. Marines were disembarked both at Vladivostok and at the terminal of the Murmansk railroad.

But with the Czecho-Slovak successes and the rapid decline of Soviet power a wider vista opened. It has been found practicable to intervene in a military way to free Rus-

sia from German domination and to arouse a desire, both in what is left of Russia and in the western and southern provinces annexed by Germany, to drive the Germans back again within their own borders. Every Germanized state—Finland, perhaps, excepted—is sick of German arrogance and rapacity. A new Russia, freed, nationalized and invigorated, would become an agent for the liberation of the lost Caucasus provinces, the Crimea, the Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Livonia and Estonia. The Germans would be thrown everywhere on the defensive. They would have to renounce their conquests or create a new Eastern front to retain them.

Have Entered Russia At Many Points

The Allies have now entered Russian territory at many points. The Czecho-Slovaks hold Vladivostok and some territory west of it toward the Ussuri River. They also hold the Transsiberian line west of Lake Baikal all the way to the Urals. West of the Urals they have advanced to the upper Volga River. French, British, American and Japanese detachments have reached Vladivostok, where they will operate to clear the railroad west to the Chinese border and to contain and capture the Teuton ex-prisoners and Red Guards who control the Siberian maritime province.

The main force of the Japanese, with Chinese auxiliaries, is probably moving up through Manchuria from Port Arthur. It intends, apparently, to strike from the northwestern Manchurian border for Chita and then clear the railroad west to Lake Baikal and Irkutsk. A Russian force under General Semenov has twice tried to invade Siberia from Manchuria and has twice been driven back by the Bolsheviks. But the Red Guards and their Teuton associates are not likely to make a serious stand against trained Japanese troops. The purely military difficulties of an expedition to Chita and Lake Baikal are not great. But transport and supply may make some trouble after the cold weather sets in.

Czecho-Slovaks' Rear Will Be Safe

When Chita and Irkutsk are reached the first purpose of the Siberian relief expedition will have been accomplished. The rear of the Czecho-Slovaks will be secured. A line of retreat to the Pacific through Manchuria will be opened for them, in case it becomes desirable for them to head again for the East.

From Irkutsk west to the Urals, through Tomsk and Omsk, there is no obstacle at present to an extension of the Allied line. This country is under the control of an anti-Bolshevik government, which has declared its independence of Russia. There are Czecho-Slovak detachments at the principal railway centers, working in harmony with the local authorities. No fighting has been reported in Central and West-

ern Siberia for several months past.

The second purpose of the Siberian expedition will be to round up the Teuton ex-prisoners in Eastern Siberia. East of Chita the unfinished Amur River branch of the Siberian railroad turns northeast, following the line of the Shilka River until the latter empties into the Amur. This uncompleted railroad, the Shilka and the Amur rivers are the main line of communication between the Province of Aum, the Bolshevik stronghold, and Trans-Baikalia.

Bolsheviks Along the Chinese Border

From the Amur strong Bolshevik contingents made their way into the Trans-Baikalia province. They formerly held Irkutsk, across the lake, but were driven out early this summer by the Czecho-Slovaks. They now bar the way to an Allied advance from the Chinese border. If defeated they will have to retire down the Amur railroad line, the Shilka and the Amur rivers, on the last of which there are many river vessels available. How far the Allies intend to pursue them in that direction is a question of military expediency solely.

At present the Red Guards are relatively strong in numbers, but they probably have little artillery and are under lax discipline. The Czecho-Slovaks, so far as they have come into contact with these forces, both in Trans-Baikalia and in and about Vladivostok, have killed the Germans, Austrians and Hungarians and disarmed the Russians. The policy of disarming the Russians will probably be followed. The Teuton ex-prisoners who surrender will be interned in Japan.

Forces in Control Along the Ussuri

The Czecho-Slovaks and the other Allied forces in Vladivostok are now in contact with the Amur Bolsheviks and their auxiliaries in the Ussuri River region, west of Vladivostok. The Siberian railroad runs west from the Pacific to the Ussuri and there joins a branch line coming down from the Amur. The northern terminus of this branch is Khabarovsk. Just north of the Ussuri junction is Nikolskoye. The Red Guards came down the railroad line in force and occupied Nikolskoye. They intended to cut the Chinese Eastern Railroad between the Ussuri and the Manchurian frontier. The Czecho-Slovaks marched west from Vladivostok early this summer and ejected the enemy from this town. But they have been hard put to hold their own against more numerous enemy forces gathered on the line of the Ussuri.

Last Friday Tokio announced that Japanese troops had advanced beyond Nikolskoye. Lieutenant General Otani is beginning to get the situation in hand.

In the narrow section near the Pacific Coast a round-up of the Bolsheviks and Teuton prisoners is more practicable. Communications north are good and the Allies, if they cared to do so, could march to the Amur and, proceeding up it, occupy Blagoveshensk. That would extinguish the Bolshevik movement in the East. The Japanese, as a precaution, have already seized Nikolskoye, on the Pacific Coast, at the mouth of the Amur. This port is about 700 miles north of Vladivostok. But for a successful campaign in the maritime province and along the

Amur a considerable Allied force will be needed.

The Allies have established themselves at two other points in Asiatic Russia. The British have recently dispatched small contingents to Bokhara and Baku. Both these operations are defensive in character. After the treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed all Middle Asia seemed to lie open to Germany. The Germans thought so themselves. They believed they had found a new route to India. The "Berlin to Baghdad" slogan was dropped. Bagdad was in British hands. The German public found a new watchword of empire. It was "Berlin to Bokhara." Bokhara lies close to the northernmost projection of India, and an alternative route south lies through Persia and Afghanistan.

British First To Reach Bokhara

The British, however, have beaten the Germans to Bokhara. The Bokharan province is probably loosely attached to the new independent government of Turkistan, which is anti-Bolshevik. But conditions are unsettled. The British expedition, composed of East India troops, came up through Baluchistan and Eastern Persia.

The new Persian government seems to have turned away from Turkey and the Pan-Turanian agitators. Since Russia disappeared and Great Britain annulled the partition of Persia with Russia into "spheres of influence" relations between Tehran and London have become more cordial. With Persia's active or passive good will the British can maintain a force in Bokhara, protecting the Bokharan railroad and guarding the northern approaches to India.

Persia also put no obstacles in the way of the second British expedition—across her northwestern provinces—from Mesopotamia to Baku. Last spring, when the right wing of the British army in Mesopotamia was making rapid progress up the Tigris and east of the Tigris toward Mosul, a Turkish force—mostly Kurds—moved from Lake Van into Northwestern Persia with the apparent intention of working down on the right flank of the advancing British. The Turks reached Lake Urmiah, but got no further.

Now British troops—a small body, naturally—have passed through Northwestern Persia from the Tigris, taken ship at Enzeli, on the Caspian Sea, and disembarked at Baku.

Allies Aid Bolshevik Forces at Baku

Baku is the terminus of the railroad across Transcaucasia from Batumi, on the Black Sea. At Brest-Litovsk Russia surrendered to Turkey the districts of Kars, Erivan and Batumi. The Turks had to fight to get possession of them, for the Armenian population resisted and the independent governments set up in the rest of the Caucasus were hostile. Turkey finally got possession of the greater part of the three districts.

But Turkish ambitions didn't stop there. The Pan-Turanian agitators wanted to open a road into Bokhara and Turkistan. Turkish troops have been trying for some time to take Baku, the chief west shore port of the Caspian and the centre of a great oil trade. Control of Baku,

With a Little Help From the Entente New Power Will Cause Reshifting of Men From Western Front and Make Passage of Rhine Easier

with its shipping, means control of the Caspian.

Armenians and Bolsheviks joined in opposing the Turkish invasion of Eastern Transcaucasia. They have defended Baku and the British expedition is cooperating with them. Baku is also the key to the control of the trans-Caspian railroad, running east from the Caspian Sea into Turkistan, and of the routes into North-eastern Persia.

With a sufficient force Baku could also be used as a base for operations up the Volga River. The Czecho-Slovaks hold the upper Volga. Between the Volga and the Don are the Cossacks, who are strongly anti-Bolshevik. A connection with the Czecho-Slovaks could be made along this line. But it would be a long, precarious route, far inferior to the route across Siberia. The occupation of Baku is, therefore, probably a purely precautionary measure—like the occupation of Bokhara.

Allies Hold Base On Arctic Coast

There remains the Allied expedition into Northern Russia. Murmansk, the ice-free port on the Kola peninsula, was the chief entry point of Allied supplies for Russia when Russia was at war with Germany. Archangel came second. The Allies took possession of the Murmansk littoral after Lenin and Trotsky turned Russia over to the Germans. They had to protect the vast quantities of material stored there.

The Murmansk railroad and coast were also threatened by the Finns, acting under German instructions. As chaos spread in Russia the Allied forces in the north were increased. British, American and French marines were easily landed there, since the Kola peninsula is only a relatively short distance from the base of the Allied fleets north of Scotland. The Finnish-German expedition to seize the railroad has not yet materialized. The Finns do not want to fight the Allies, although Germany has compelled Lenin to cede Carelia to Finland as a bait for Finnish ambitions.

Recently the Allies also landed at Archangel, where a pro-Ally independent government has been set up and a new state has been proclaimed, embracing several of the northern Russian provinces. The Red Guard forces in Archangel have retreated down the railroad toward Vologda, the junction point of the Archangel line with a line running west to Petrograd. The Allies have pursued the Red Guards 100 miles down the Archangel-Vologda railway to Pabreshkaia, where they have been held up. They are in a friendly country, however, and ought to be able to reach Vologda, if sufficiently reinforced.

Reds Fail to Break Line of the Volga

From Vologda the Archangel railroad continues south to Yaroslavl. This city was the centre of an anti-Bolshevik uprising a couple of months ago. The Bolsheviks retook it after hard fighting. From Yaroslavl the railroad turns southeast through Kovrov and Nijni-Novgorod (the great Eastern Russia trade centre) to Russayevka, from which branches radiate to Kazan, Simbirsk and Samara. Volga River towns which are held by the Czecho-Slovaks. Thus another line of communication with the Czecho-Slovaks can be established by way of Archangel. The Volga River line from Kazan to Simbirsk and Samara—about 200 miles in length—represents the Czecho-Slovaks' western front. They hold other towns eastward to the Urals. But in this rear region fighting has died out, as it has in Western Siberia. The people are living under practically autonomous local governments.

Within the last six weeks the Moscow Soviet government has been making desperate efforts to break the Volga line. But according to Lenin's own confession the Red Guards have been very reluctant to face the Czecho-Slovaks. The only dependable Soviet troops are the Letts, who seem to have pro-German sympathies.

Few Anti-Bolsheviks Among Don Cossacks

In the Don Cossack territory there are some anti-Bolshevik forces, but they are poorly organized and have undertaken no aggressive movements. In a way, however, they protect the southern flank of the Czecho-Slovak army in Russian proper. The Czecho-Slovaks are about 500 miles east of Moscow.

General March was emphatically right when he said the other day that

"the idea of trying to establish an Eastern front in Russia with a little handful of Americans is simply ridiculous." Intervention in Russia would be ridiculous if the United States alone were to undertake it. But it has behind it the military strength of all the Western Allies. It has also the merit of employing for the first time since the fall of Kiao-Chau the untouched strength of Japan. It also employs to some extent the resources of China.

Chance Justifies Allied Intervention

For its own limited purposes Allied intervention is fully justified on military as well as political grounds. It takes a chance on the establishment of a new front of collision with Germany—a grandiose idea, but not half so grandiose as the venture which the Czecho-Slovaks have demonstrated to be entirely practicable.

The Czecho-Slovaks had the faith which moves mountains. And they did move mountains.

In the main, however, and for the present the Allied front in Russia—a country of magnificent distances—must be largely a moral front. It could not stand if it were not. It represents a purpose—self-interest, of course, but genuine—to put the Russian nation again on its feet. The Allies do not want to conquer Russia. They want to save her. In so far as that purpose becomes clear to those Russians who still hope for national regeneration, native cooperation will undoubtedly follow. The great mass of the Russians apparently care little about the form of government under which they live. But they are beginning to have a real desire for the return of order and economic stability. They recognize in a vague way, moreover, that Germany and Germany's Bolshevik tools have committed a ghastly crime against Russia and Slavdom. The new Russia, whatever else it is, will be anti-German.

Would at Least Resist Germans

Whether a new government, pro-Ally and nationalistic in character, would reenter the war, is an obscure problem. But it would resist German penetration at every point. It would try to recover the Russian Black Sea fleet. It would try to regain the Crimea (which Turkey covets) and the Black Sea coast, which Germany holds by no warrant but the sword. It would try to reunite the dismembered parts of the empire. It might go further and denounce the iniquitous Brest-Litovsk treaty, thus putting Germany on notice that her possession of the lost Western provinces will terminate as soon as Germany's ability to hold them by force vanishes.

Germany is in the same position with her military conquests as Napoleon. His rule was propped up by bayonets. Wherever the bayonets were withdrawn the imperial structure crumbled.

So the conquered Russian dependencies are now a peril rather than an asset to Germany. She has ruthlessly exploited Poland and the Ukraine. She is trying to conscript the Finns. She is ordering the Lithuanians and the people of the Baltic states to raise armies for "domestic defence"—that is, against Russia. But armies which are raised in Lithuania, Courland, Livonia and Estonia would be no longer of use to Germany if a new Eastern front should be created. They would turn against their conquerors and oppressors as Napoleon's foreign contingents did whenever they had the chance.

Ukraine Already Revolts Against Huns

The Ukraine is already in revolt against German tyranny. Poland is smouldering with disaffection. A new nationalized Russia, re-created by Allied aid, would inevitably lead to attempts in the several provinces to attain freedom through Russian and Allied assistance. Germany might not have to face on a new Eastern front two or three millions of soldiers—armies like those of the Grand Duke Nicholas or Brusiloff. But she would have to face the sullen hostility of millions of Slav subjects, eager to be free and ready to strike for freedom as soon as the grip of German military occupation began to relax.

There can, therefore, easily be a new moral and psychological Eastern front, which, if the war lasts a year longer, may suddenly change into a real military front. For Germany Russia is becoming a quicksand. She cannot draw out. Yet if she stays she will be gradually engulfed and suffocated.